

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 05758

EXDIS

PASS SECRETARY VANCE AND SECRETARY BROWN FROM AMBASSADO
BREWSTER
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN
SUBJECT: THE PRESS AND THE PRESIDENT: RECOMMENDED
PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIONS.

1. ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC MOOD
IS BASICALLY SUPPORTIVE, WE ARE GOING THROUGH A ROUGH
PERIOD OF CARPING BRITISH AND EUROPEAN PRESS COMMENT
ON A BROAD RANGE OF POLICIES: MILITARY, ECONOMIC,
NUCLEAR, DIPLOMATIC. FOCUS HAS BEEN ON WHAT IS TERMED
"IRRESOLUTION" ON THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION,
INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE INFLATION PACKAGE, WEAKNESS
TOWARDS THE SOVIETS AND CONFUSION ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERA-
TION POLICIES. HERE, CRITICISM HAS BEEN SHARPEST FROM
THE SENIOR CONSERVATIVE ESTABLISHMENT AND ITS PRESS, BU
IS WIDESPREAD.

2. WHAT IS NEEDED AT THIS POINT IS THE KIND OF
PERSPECTIVE ON THE PRESIDENT AND HIS POLICIES WHICH
YOU ARE IN A PARTICULARLY STRONG POSITION TO PRESENT.
THIS WOULD NOT ONLY MOLLIFY LOCAL OPINION, BUT BECAUSE
OF THE AUTHORITY OF SOME BRITISH PUBLICATIONS AND
WRITERS COULD HAVE A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT ON
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EUROPEAN OPINION MAKERS GENERALLY. TOGETHER YOU HAVE
A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THE SPIRAL UPWARD.

3. THEREFORE, I RECOMMEND:
A. THAT SECRETARY VANCE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOME OF THE
EXTREMELY SMALL AMOUNT OF FREE TIME AVAILABLE TO HIM
ON TUESDAY, APRIL 18 TO HOLD A BACKGROUNDER FOR A

CAREFULLY SELECTED, SMALL GROUP OF EIGHT
TO TWELVE SENIOR, INFLUENTIAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS WRITERS,
COMMENTATORS AND EDITORS.

B. THAT SECRETARY BROWN, IN ADDITION TO HIS HALF-
HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE ON MONDAY, APRIL 17, AGREE TO
HOLD A BACKGROUNDER OVER THE WEEKEND FOR A SMALL GROUP
OF EIGHT TO TWELVE CAREFULLY SELECTED SENIOR INFLUENTIAL
WRITERS EDITORS AND COMMENTATORS ON DEFENSE AFFAIRS AND
ALSO TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THE INVITATION WE HAVE
JUST RECEIVED FOR SECRETARY BROWN TO TAKE PART IN A
SHORT INTERVIEW ON THE BBC-TV CHANNEL TWO PROGRAM,
"NEWS DAY." THIS IS A HIGHLY-RESPECTED, EARLY EVENING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM. THE INTERVIEWER PROBABLY WOULD
BE MICHAEL CHARLTON, WHO IS EXCELLENT AND WELL DISPOSED
TOWARDS THE U. S. THIS COULD BE TAPED IN YOUR HOTEL
OR AT THE STUDIO OVER THE WEEKEND.

4. TO ARRANGE THESE EVENTS, WE WOULD NEED DECISIONS
BY AS EARLY IN THE DAY AS POSSIBLE FRIDAY, APRIL 14
FOR SECRETARY BROWN AND AS EARLY IN THE DAY AS POSSIBLE
MONDAY, APRIL 17 FOR SECRETARY VANCE.
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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY VANCE AND SECRETARY BROWN.
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